

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 10236 201006Z

44

ACTION ORM-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 DHA-02 AID-05 INSE-00

VO-03 OMB-01 /096 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3961

USMISSION GENEVA

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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BEIRUT PASS USINT BAGHDAD

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, SREF, IZ, IR, AU, NL, GW, GR, IT, DA

SUB: KURDISH REFUGEES RETURNING TO IRAQ EN MASSE

REF: TEHRAN 9909

SUMMARY

SOME 26,000 KURDISH REFUGEES RETURNED TO IRAQ DURING FIRST HALF OF OCTOBER. PROSPECT IS FOR TOTAL OF BETWEEN 60,000 AND 80,000 TO OPT FOR RETURN, AS THEY REALIZE CHANCES FOR EASY ASSIMILATION IN IRAN ARE DIM. LATTER FIGURE WOULD LEAVE ABOUT 10,000 IN IRAN. ALTHOUGH NOT ALL OF KURDISH RETURNEES WILL BE ABLE TO RETURN TO

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PAGE 02 TEHRAN 10236 201006Z

THEIR HOME AREAS, LACK OF REPORTS OF ANY SIGNIFICANT PERSECUTION

OF RECENT RETURNEES HAS INCREASED WILLINGNESS OF OTHERS TO GO BACK. HARD CORE OF BARZANI LEADERSHIP GROUP NOW SETTLED NEAR KARAJ, WEST OF TEHRAN, WHERE GOI CAN KEEP THEM UNDER CONTROL BETTER THAN IN NORTHWEST. GOI WILL NOT PERMIT KURDISH REFUGEES TO GO TO OTHER COUNTRIES UNTIL MOVEMENT TO IRAQ COMPLETED DECEMBER 10. UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE GOODYEAR IS PLANNING PROCEDURAL STEPS NECESSARY TO PREPARE REFUGEES FOR DEPARTURE TO COUNTRIES WILLING TO ACCEPT THEM: US, AUSTRIA, NETHERLANDS, AND POSSIBLY DENMARK. HE HOPES IT WILL STILL BE POSSIBLE FOR INS TO SEND REPRESENTATIVE TO TEHRAN, AND PLANS TO SO RECOMMEND TO HIS HEADQUARTERS IN GENEVA. END SUMMARY.

1. RETURN TO IRAQ. THIS MOVEMENT IS ALREADY UNDERWAY. ACCORDING TO MFA AND GENDARMERIE SOURCES, SOME 26,000 REFUGEES RETURNED TO IRAQ DURING FIRST TWO WEEKS OF OCTOBER. ALL ARE BEING PROCESSED THROUGH QASR SHIRIN BORDER POST, REGARDLESS OF WHICH AREA OF IRAN THEY HAVE COME FROM. OUT-PROCESSING IS MINIMAL, CONSISTING MAINLY OF HEADCOUNTS AS BATCHES OF ONE TO TWO THOUSAND MOVE THROUGH. GENDARMERIE OFFICERS EXPECT THAT AS MANY AS SIXTY THOUSAND WILL EVENTUALLY RETURN. KURDISH DEMOCRATIC PARTY OFFICIAL MOHAMMED MAHMUD ABDUL-RAHMAN ("SAMI") EXPECTS NUMBER TO RISE TO EIGHTY THOUSAND AS REFUGEES IN IRAN LOSE HOPE OF SUCCESSFULLY INTEGRATING INTO IRANIAN SOCIETY. HE ALLEGES IRANIAN OFFICIALS ARE ENCOURAGING REFUGEES TO LEAVE BY TELLING THEM ONLY JOBS AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES WILL BE UNSKILLED ONES (EVEN FOR THOSE POSSESSING SKILLS), PLACING BUREAUCRATIC BARRIERS IN THEIR WAY WHEN THEY DEAL WITH GOI, AND SPREADING WORD THAT BEST SOLUTION FOR KURDS IS TO RETURN TO IRAQ. SAMI ALLEGED IRANIAN GUARDS HAD FIRED INTO ANZEL REFUGEE CAMP NEAR QASR SHIRIN NIGHT OF SEPT 26, KILLING NINE REFUGEES IN MOVE PLANNED TO PRESSURE KURDS TO MOVE. (ANOTHER ACCOUNT OF SAME INCIDENT SUGGESTS REFUGEES INSISTED ON LEAVING CAMP TO TAKE BATHS IN NARBY VILLAGE AND DURING ENSUING ARGUMENT GUARDS OPENED FIRE.) ON OTHER HAND, SAMI STATED FOOD IN CAMPS WAS ADEQUATE AND MOST REFUGEES WELL TREATED.

2. TREATMENT IN IRAQ. SAMI DISPUTED IRANIAN CLAIMS THAT ALL REFUGEES ARE NOT FREE TO RETURN TO HOMES IN NORTHERN IRAQ. HE SAID MANY FORMER KURDISH MILITARY OFFICERS WERE BEING HELD IN DIVANIEH, ABOUT 150 KILOMETERS SOUTH OF BAGHDAD. HE ALLEGED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 TEHRAN 10236 201006Z

THAT A FREQUENT IRAQI TACTIC WITH FORMER MEMBERS OF KDP GOVERNMENT WAS TO ASSIGN THEM AS MAYORS OF SMALL TOWNS AND VILLAGES OF SOUTHERN IRAQ AS A SORT OF RUSTICATION. ALTHOUGH MOST KURDS WILL BE ABLE TO GO NORTHK AREAS SUCH AS KIRKUK, SINJAR, KHANEQI, ZAMAR, AND SHEIKHAN WILL BE OUT OF BOUNDS TO THEM. SAMI HAD NOT HEARD OF ANY MISTREATMENT OF LATEST RETURNEES.

3. SETTLEMENT WITHIN IRAN. SAMI SAID ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE FAMILIES OF KURDISH LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING GENERAL BARZANI'S SON IDRIS, ARE NOW SETTLED IN PERMANENT QUARTERS BUILT IN VILLAGE OF AZIMIEH JUST NORTH OF KARAJ NEAR FOOTHILLS OF ALBORZ MOUNTAINS. KURDS HAD ASKED ORIGINALLY THAT SEVEN HUNDRED FAMILIES BE SETTLED IN ONE GROUP, BUT IRANIANS HAD PARED THIS DOWN TO ONE HUNDRED FAMILIES, OR ABOUT SIX HUNDRED PERSONS. SAMI EXPECTED THAT ONCE MAJOR RETURN OF KURDS WAS COMPLETED REMAINING ONES COULD BE MANAGED MORE EASILY BY IRANIANS AND TREATED BETTER. STILL HE EXPECTED THAT PERHAPS TWELVE FAMILIES FROM AMONG LEADING KURDS MIGHT SEEK TO LEAVE IRAN FOR OTHER COUNTRIES. INFORMATION FROM GENDARMERIE SOURCES INDICATES BULK OF REFUGEES NOW IN KERMANSHAHEUD AND WEST AZERBAIJAN PROVINCES (25,000 AND OVER 18,000 RESPECTIVELY) AS REFUGEES ARE BEING STAGED FOR RETURN TO IRAQ.

4. MOVEMENT TO THIRD COUNTRIES. MAJOR NEW DEVELOPMENT COMING OUT OF UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE GOODYEAR'S CONSULTATIONS WITH MFA OFFICIAL GHASSEMI IS THAT IRANIANS WANT TO POSTPONE REFUGEE DEPARTURES FOR THIRD COUNTRIES UNTIL CURRENT MASS RETURN TO IRAQ IS COMPLETED ON DECEMBER 10. IRANIANS CLEARLY WANT TO BE SURE KURDISH REFUGEES WHO ARE WEIGHING POSSIBILITY OF RETURN TO IRAQ MAKE UP THEIR MINDS BEFORE ANY GO ELSEWHERE. GOODYEAR'S REACTION TO EMOFFS HAS BEEN THAT THIS DELAY CONSTITUTES NO PROBLEM BECAUSE PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS WOULD TAKE THAT LONG ANYWAY. HE STILL HOPES IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE FOR INS TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS IN TEHRAN, AND PLANS TO SO RECOMMEND THROUGH HIS CHANNELS. IF THIS IS STILL RULED OUT, HE ESTIMATES FRANKFURT WOULD BE BEST PREPARED TO HANDLE KURDISH REFUGEES. PROCEDURAL STEPS TO BE ARRANGED ARE (A) SECURITY CLEARANCE, (B) MEDICAL EXAMINATION, (C) LAISSEZ-PASSERS, (D) SPONSORSHIP, AND (E) TRANSPORTATION. GOODYEAR WILL ASK FOR IRANIAN ASSISTANT ON SECURITY CLEARANCE FOR PERIOD EACH REFUGEE HAS SPENT IN IRAN, AND WOULD RECOMMEND STANDARD STATEMENT SAYING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 TEHRAN 10236 201006Z

RECORDS COVERING PERIOD IN IRAQ ARE NOT AVAILABLE. MEDICAL EXAM COULD BE GIVEN HERE, WITH X-RAY POSTPONED UNTIL ARRIVAL IN EUROPE IF REFUGEES ARE PROCESSED THERE. IRAN WOULD ISSUE LAISSEZ-PASSERS, AND GOODYEAR FORESEES NO PROBLEM IN SECURING TWO-YEAR PERIOD FOR PROVISIONAL RETURN. ASSUMING KURDISH ORGANIZATION IN US WOULD NOT BE ADEQUATE SPONSOR IN EYES OF INS, HE BELIEVES WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES WILLING TO TAKE THAT RESPONSIBILITY. GOODYEAR SAYS MFA HAS NOT RULED OUT POSSIBILITY IRANIAN COULD GIVE HELP ON TRANSPORTATION OF REFUGEES. LEAVING ASIDE US ALTERNATIVE, OTHER COUNTRIES WILLING TO TAKE KURDISH REFUGEES ARE AUSTRIA (100 PEOPLE), NETHERLANDS (50 FAMILIES ACCORDING TO AMBASSADOR'S RECOMMENDATION, BUT 17 KURDS WHO WENT THERE ILLEGALLY A FEW MONTHS AGO MAY BE DEDUCTED), AND UK AND SWITZERLAND (A FEW REFUGEES WHO HAVE EXPERIENCE IN, OR TIES WITH, EACH COUNTRY.) SWEDEN IS ON FENCE, AND GOODYEAR IS

CONTACTING DANISH EMBASSY HERE IN HOPES DENMARK WILL AGREE TO TAKE
A SPECIFIC NUMBER.

5. COMMENT: GOODYEAR IS BEING HELPFUL TO EMBASSY AND HAS GIVEN
US COMPLETE BRIEFING ON HIS ACTIVITIES HERE. ONLY PROBLEM WE
SEE IS POTENTIAL CONFLICT BETWEEN HIS DESIRE TO BE TOTALLY
COOPRATIVE WITH GOI AND NEED TO PUSH AHEAD VIGOROUSLY IF REFUGEES
ARE TO BE PREPARED FOR MOVEMENT TO THIRD COUNTRIES BY DEC. 10.
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